

Gumuz language

Gumuz (also spelled **Gumaz**) is a dialect cluster spoken along the border of Ethiopia and Sudan. It has been tentatively classified within the Nilo-Saharan family. Most Ethiopian speakers live in Kamashi Zone and Metekel Zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, although a group of 1,000 reportedly live outside the town of Welkite (Unseth 1989). The Sudanese speakers live in the area east of Er Roseires, around Famaka and Fazoglo on the Blue Nile, extending north along the border.^[2] Dimmendaal et al. (2019) suspect that the poorly attested varieties spoken along the river constitute a distinct language, Kadallu.^[4]

An early record of this language is a wordlist from the Mount Guba area compiled in February 1883 by Juan Maria Schuver.^[5]

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Varieties

Varieties are not all mutually intelligible. By that standard, there are two or three Gumuz languages. Grammatical forms are distinct between northern and southern Gumuz.^[6]

Daats'iin, discovered in 2013, is clearly a distinct language, though closest to southern Gumuz. The poorly attested varieties in Sudan are likely a distinct language as well, Kadallu. (See B' aga languages.)

Ethnologue lists Guba, Wenbera, Sirba, Agalo, Yaso, Mandura, Dibate, and Metemma as Gumuz dialects, with Mandura, Dibate, and Metemma forming a dialect cluster.

Ahland (2004)^[7] provides comparative lexical data for the Guba, Mandura, North Dibat'e, Wenbera, Sirba Abay, Agelo Meti, Yaso, and Metemma dialects.

Phonology

Gumuz	
Native to	Ethiopia, Sudan
Region	Benishangul-Gumuz Region; Amhara Region; Blue Nile Province
Ethnicity	Gumuz
Native speakers	180,000 in Ethiopia (2007 census) ^[1] 40,000 in Sudan (no date) ^[2]
Language family	Nilo-Saharan? <div> <div><div>Komuz</div></div> <div><div>Gumuz</div></div> <div><div>Gumuz</div></div> </div>
Dialects	Northern <p>Southern</p> <p>Yaso</p>
Writing system	Ethiopic, Latin (in Ethiopia)
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	guk
Glottolog	gumu1244 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/gumu1244) ^[3]

Gumuz has both ejective consonants and implosives. The implosive quality is being lost at the velar point of articulation in some dialects (Unseth 1989). There is a series of palatal consonants, including both ejective and implosive. In some dialects, e.g. Sirba, there is a labialized palatalized bilabial stop, as in the word for 'rat' [b^j w a] (Unseth 1989).

Tones are high and low, with downstep.^[8]

Grammar

Word order is AVO, with marked nominative case, though there is AOV order in the north, probably from Amharic influence .

In intransitive clauses, subjects in S–V order are unmarked, whereas those in V–S order are marked for nominative case.^[8]

Notes

1. Ethiopia 2007 Census (http://www.csa.gov.et/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=doc&id=264&format=raw&Itemid=521)
2. Gumuz language (https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show_language/guk) at *Ethnologue* (16th ed., 2009)
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Northern Gumuz" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gumu1244>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Gerrit Dimmendaal, Colleen Ahland & Angelika Jakobi (2019) Linguistic features and typologies in languages commonly referred to as 'Nilo-Saharan', *Cambridge Handbook of African Linguistics*, p. 6–7
5. Wendy James, et al., *Juan Maria Schuver's Travels in North East Africa, 1880-1883* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1996), pp. 340-43
6. Ahland, Colleen Anne. 2004. "Linguistic variation within Gumuz: a study of the relationship between historical change and intelligibility." M.A. thesis. University of Texas at Arlington.
7. Ahland, Colleen Anne. 2004. *Linguistic Variation Within Gumuz: A Study of the Relationship Between Historical Change and Intelligibility (Ethiopia, Sudan)*. MA thesis, University of Texas at Arlington.
8. Colleen Ahland, 2012. "A Grammar of Northern and Southern Gumuz", Doctoral Dissertation, University of Oregon.

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- Ahland, Colleen Anne. A Grammar of Northern and Southern Gumuz. Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon.
- Dimmendaal, Gerrit J., 2000. "Number marking and noun categorization in Nilo-Saharan languages". *Anthropological Linguistics* 42:214-261.

Further reading

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- Colleen Ahland. 2011. *Noun incorporation and predicate classifiers in Gumuz*

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- Uzar, Henning. 1993. Studies in Gumuz: Sese phonology and TMA system. In *Topics in Nilo-Saharan linguistics*, edited by M.L. Bender. Hamburg: Helmut Buske: 347-383.
- World Atlas of Language Structures information on Gumuz (http://wals.info/languoid/lect/wals_code_gmz)
- Website maintained by the Gumuz language community with published literature in the language (<http://www.gumuz-web.com>)

External links

- Gumuz basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (<http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\kmz\gum&limit=-1>)
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